DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 333 895 IR 053 657

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TITLE Christmas in Your Library: Get To Know Gifts and Exchange.
PUB DATE 90
NOTE 6p.; Poster session presented at the Annual Conference of the American Library Association (Chicago, IL, June 24, 1990) and the Annual Conference of the Mississippi Library Association (Jackson, MS, November 7, 1990).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Libraries; Higher Education; Library Acquisition; *Library Collection Development; Library Services; Policy Formation
IDENTIFIERS *Gifts and Exchange Functions

ABSTRACT

Not every library has a specific department or area to handle its gifts and exchanges. This function is a vital part of every library program. This presentation is designed to increase awareness of the valuable contribution that the gifts and exchange function makes to the overall library program. Some of the contributions of the gifts and exchange program include: (1) materials received from individuals and agencies that enhance the library's collection development program; (2) exchanges received from members of various exchange organizations which replace missing periodical issues and monographs; and (3) university publications received from fellow institutions. Methods of increasing awareness include: (1) recognizing all gifts received with letters of appreciation; (2) posting announcements and articles pertaining to gifts and exchange in library/university newsletters; and (3) specifically recognizing exceptional gifts in monthly and annual reports to inform university and library administrators of these contributions. Two unusual sources of materials are noted: memorial gifts, and gifts of periodical subscriptions. Eight suggested readings are listed. (Author/BBM)

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Christmas in Your Library: Get to Know Gifts and Exchange

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ED333895

The following was submitted, accepted and presented as a poster session in the 1990 American Library Association Annual Conference held in Chicago, Illinois, on June 24, 1990. It was presented a second time at the 1990 Mississippi Library Association Annual Conference held in Jackson on November 7, 1990.

ABSTRACT:

Not every library has a specific department or area to handle its gifts and exchanges. This function is a vital part of every library program. This presentation, "Christmas in Your Library," is designed to increase awareness of the valuable contribution that the gifts and exchange function makes to the overall library program. Some of the contributions of the gifts and exchange program include (1) materials received from individuals and agencies which enhance the library's collection development program, (2) exchanges received from members of various exchange organizations which replace missing periodical issues and monographs, and (3) university publications received from fellow institutions. Methods of increasing awareness include (1) recognizing all gifts received with letters of appreciation, (2) posting announcements and articles pertaining to gifts and exchange

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in library/university newsletters, and (3) specifically recognizing exceptional gifts in monthly and annual reports to inform university and library's administrators of these contributions.

Gifts may be defined as materials given without expectation of reciprocal action on the part of the library. Working with gifts involves the following procedures: (1) acquiring library materials through means other than purchase, (2) acknowledgement, (3) solicitation, (4) publicity, (5) integrating needed items into library collections, and (6) disposing of unwanted items. Gift materials include books, private or archival papers, government documents, periodicals, media, furniture, supplies, and money. Anything that can be utilized by a library can be classified as a gift.

Exchanges involve materials for which other materials or services are received or expected in the future. Working with exchanges involves the following procedures: (1) soliciting exchanges with other institutions, (2) obtaining materials to offer on exchange, and (3) maintaining appropriate records of exchange transactions. Exchange materials include duplicates, university publications, inappropriate materials, such as textbooks; and other miscellaneous library materials. Exchanges should be treated as gifts and conform to a gift policy.

One contribution the gifts and exchange function makes to the overall library program is via materials received from individuals and agencies. Every library should have a written policy for accepting gifts, even if there is no specific program, to promote

good public relations with patrons. All gifts should be accepted without commitments to final disposition and with the understanding that materials are not automatically added to the library's collection. The library should have the authority to add gift materials that complement the collection while exchanging duplicate and unwanted materials.

A second way in which the gifts and exchange function contributes to the overall library program is through the exchanges received from members of various organizations such as the Duplicate Exchange Union (DEU), the Universal Serials and Book Exchange (USBE), and EBSCO's Missing Copy Bank. These items enhance collection development by strengthening specific subject or author collections, acquiring useful out-of-print materials, and replacing missing issues in periodical collections.

A third aspect of the gifts and exchange function which contributes to the overall library program is through university publications received from fellow institutions. Exchange agreements between universities allow each school to contribute issues of its publications to the other without cost. This exchange offers an excellent alternative to purchasing certain materials.

One of the best and easiest ways to promote the bestowal of future gifts is to thank the donor in writing. Form letters are suitable for acknowledging gifts from agencies or institutions but personalized letters should be sent to individuals, especially those who contribute materials regularly. A donor who feels his/her gifts are not appreciated may decide to discontinue

contributions to the library. On the other hand, a donor who is assured that he/she is helping to fill a void in the library's holdings may recommend to peers that they do the same. Remember, a librarian's relationship with a donor can enhance the potential for future contributions.

Another way to increase the awareness of the gifts and exchange function is to post announcements and articles about recent gifts or outstanding exchanges in library and/or university newsletters. Publicizing the gift of an exceptional record collection, for example, will promote patron usage and appreciation of its donor. Such notices show potential donors that gifts need not be restricted to monetary contributions. Announcements can also be sent to larger publications such as College & Research Libraries News to be included in the "News From the Field" section.

A third method of increasing awareness of the gifts and exchange function is specific recognition of exceptional gifts in monthly and annual reports that inform the university and library's administrators of contributions. These reports should list notable donors/gifts and elaborate on their enhancement of the library's collection development program. Administrators may opt to send letters of appreciation for gifts. Informing the hierarchy will increase their understanding of the importance of gifts in strengthening collection development

Memorial gifts are one unusual source of materials. Gifts of books or the money to buy them are presented as memorials to friends or relatives, or to honor living persons. Usually memorials involve special bookplates, individual handling, and

special correspondence to thank the donors and to notify relatives, heirs, or honorees. There should be an agreement between the library and the donor on the title(s) selected.

Gift periodical subscriptions are another unusual source of free materials. A donor may prefer to purchase the subscription to a title and have it mailed directly to the library, or he/she may opt to donate the money for the purchase of the subscription. This alternate method of acquiring periodicals demands constant management in order to obtain renewal subscriptions from donors each year.

Suggested Readings

Bloomberg, Marty. Introduction to Technical Services for Library Technicians. Third edition. Library Unlimited, 1976.

DeWitt, Donald L. "Unsolicited Marginal Gift Collections: Saying No or Coping With the Unwanted." Library Acquisitions. v.12 no. 304 (1988) pp. 357-362.

Futas, Elizabeth, ed. Library Acquisitions Policies and Procedures. Second edition. Oryx Press, 1984.

Garg, K. C. and Ojha. "A Low-Cost Manual System for the Exchange of Periodicals." Serials Librarian. v. 14 no. 1-2 (1988) pp. 89-93.

Huston, K. R. "How to Look a Gift Horse in the Mouth: Saying No to Donations." Bottom Line. v. 3 no. 1 (1989) pp. 14-17.

Lane, Alfred H. Gifts and Exchange Manual. Greenwood Press, 1980.

Little, P. L. and Saulmon, S. A. "Gifts, Donations, and Special Collections." Public Libraries. v. 26 (Spring 1987) pp. 8-10.

Nelson, Veneese C. "Buried Alive in Gifts." Library Journal. v. 113 (April 15, 1988) pp. 54-56.